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- ART. VII. — 1. *Hints for some Improvements in the Authorized Version of the New Testament.* By the late REV. JAMES SCHOLEFIELD, M. A., Regius Professor of Greek in the University of Cambridge. Fourth Edition. Cambridge and London. 1857.
2. *On the Authorized Version of the New Testament, in Connection with some recent Proposals for its Revision.* By RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH, D.D., Dean of Westminster. (Reprint.) New York. 1858.
3. *The Gospel according to St. John, after the Authorized Version. Newly compared with the Original Greek, and revised.* By Five Clergymen [viz. JOHN BARROW, D.D., GEORGE MOBERLY, D. C. L., HENRY ALFORD, B. D., WILLIAM G. HUMPHRY, B. D., CHARLES J. ELLICOTT, M. A.]. London. 1857.
4. *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, after the Authorized Version. Newly compared with the Original Greek, and revised.* By Five Clergymen. London. 1858.
5. *A Critical and Grammatical Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, with a Revised Translation.* By C. J. ELLICOTT, M. A. London. 1854.
6. *A Critical and Grammatical Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, with a Revised Translation.* By the same. London. 1855.
7. *A Critical and Grammatical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles, with a Revised Translation.* By the same. London. 1856.
8. *A Critical and Grammatical Commentary on St. Paul's Epistles to the Philippians, Colossians, and to Philemon, with a Revised Translation.* By the same. London. 1857.
9. *The Book of Job; the Common English Version, the Hebrew Text, and the Revised Version of the American Bible Union, with Critical and Philological Notes.* New York. 1856.
10. *The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians; translated from the Greek, on the Basis of the Common English Version, with Notes.* New York: American Bible Union. 1856.

Two centuries and a half have nearly elapsed since "The

Holy Bible, containing the Old Testament and the New, newly translated out of the Original Tongues, and with the Former Translations diligently compared and revised, by his Majesty's special Commandment," was "appointed to be read in churches." For nearly half a century it had to struggle with a lingering attachment to one of the "former translations." But from the Restoration, in 1660, to the present hour, the Bible of 1611 has been the most authentic expression of the Word of God to the mass of Christians speaking the English tongue. It has been domesticated by emigration on every continent. The earlier versions have become antiquated, and newer ones have been either shamed into oblivion, or allowed, at best, to be helps in the study of this. This is "the English Bible," while others are barely Bibles in English. In this respect its fate differs noticeably from that of its predecessors. Within a century before its appearance no less than six versions or revisions of the Bible in English had been published, one of which was but slowly superseded by it. But it has found no successor. It has come down through all the changes of time, unaffected by the greatest revolutions, attracting to itself an increasing measure of veneration and love. It has taught letters to children, eloquence to men, religion to all. In literature it is our great English classic. In religion it is our "daily bread."

This more than classic pre-eminence is due to various causes. The preceding century had been an era of great mental and moral activity, directed by religious motives or in the name of religion. The politics of Europe sprang from reformation and counter-reformation in the Church. Theology as yet was not only the noblest, but almost the only science. The standard of Biblical scholarship was high, relatively much higher than at present. But with the seventeenth century began the stirring of those secular agitations, which have seldom slept since, and are still active. From the civil war to the settlement of the Hanoverian succession, politics ruled in the Church quite as much as the Church ruled in politics. A kind of leadership was demanded that asked little aid from sacred learning. This became the occupation of here and there a scholar, whose achievements received about as intelligent ad-

miration from the majority of his clerical brethren as the polyglot attainments of our "Learned Blacksmith" may be supposed to have excited among his fellow-craftsmen. What little learning the eighteenth century gave to the cause of Christianity in England was chiefly expended upon apologetics, and at its close both theology and criticism had sunk to a very low estate. The great Evangelical revival which followed the birth of Methodism, indeed, made religion once more a power in society. But this was the fruit of devotion rather than of learning, and relied for its success upon the impression of those elementary spiritual truths which no erudite research is requisite, or even able of itself, to discover. A few great names, as of Mill, Lowth, and Campbell, light up what is mainly an age of decline in critical learning. The work of Bible translation naturally came to a stand. The authors of the received version laid, indeed, no claim to the credit of infallibility. They were only improving on the work of their predecessors. They professed to have made "honest and Christian endeavors" after "a more exact translation." There is no reason to suppose that they expected their own work to be exempt from a similar revising process, or ever flattered themselves with the hope that it would receive the unqualified veneration of ages. But there was at first no demand for improvement, and afterwards there were few who could have answered the demand had it been made. Thus time was given for its words to sink into men's hearts, till they have come to fashion the very texture of thought.

But it would be unjust to represent its extraordinary success as due wholly or mainly to accidental causes. Its great excellence is a more evident and more honorable reason. The era at which it was made was most fortunate for its merits and its fame. The "old masters" of our literature had moulded and enriched our rude vernacular, and made it for mingled strength and sweetness the noblest of modern languages. Repeated attempts at translation, by men who were among the choicest spirits of their times, and the compilation of the Book of Common Prayer, had done for the English what the Seventy, the Jewish philosophers, and the Christian Apostles and Fathers did for the Greek, and what Tertullian and Cyprian

did for the Latin tongue. A doctrinal and devotional dialect was formed, — a fit medium for expressing those ideas which Divine inspiration had brought within the reach of human intelligence, — and this dialect became the common property of the people. The translators of King James were late enough to secure the ripe fruit of these invaluable labors. They were equally fortunate in being early enough to escape those influences which have made our language at once more ductile to the varied purposes of modern usage, and less fitted for the highest offices of eloquence, poetry, and devotion. More than all, they lived when the martyr age of English Protestantism was fresh in memory. The words of the old Bibles which they “compared and revised” were not only English undefiled, but English hallowed by the intense religious earnestness of the men who wrote them, — men who plied their pious task in prison or in exile, with visions of the rack and the stake interposed between them and their heavenly consummation. Our English Bible is the Bible as interpreted by scholars who represented the best learning of a learned age, and whose characters were formed under the influence of a piety refined in the fiery furnace of persecution. Its diction, if not faultless, is yet the best example of the power and compass of our language. It has come to us without essential amendment, because its great positive excellences have caused its defects and blemishes to be viewed with more than the tenderness that forgives the faults of a beloved friend.

To this general sentiment there have been some illustrious exceptions; but the utter listlessness with which the public have received all suggestions of revising the version must have been discouraging to their authors. After men of the calibre of Lowth, Kennicott, Newcombe, Waterland, Wesley, and Campbell have declared in decided terms their conviction that great improvements might be made in it, to the signal advantage of religion, and their words have failed to awaken the slightest audible echo, it might have seemed that the English Bible, faults and all, had been accepted by English-speaking Protestants “for better, for worse,” to the end of time. Had any one predicted, as lately as ten years ago, that by this time sufficient public interest would be felt in the project of revis-

ing our translation to call forth works such as are named at the beginning of this article (to say nothing of many others, with the enumeration of whose titles it seemed not worth while to cumber the page), to call into existence large societies, with funds liberally provided by popular contribution, and to engage the co-operation of some, and the respectful attention of more, of the best Biblical scholars on either side of the Atlantic, he would have been pronounced a visionary. Yet such is the fact. It may be that the present agitation will subside, with no other result than an increased tenacity of attachment to our Bible as it is; but it seems evident that this conclusion will be resisted by many until they can at least understand "the reason why." Possibly some will be more disposed to inquire why the question is raised at all, and what can be the occasion of so unexpected a degree of interest in its discussion at this time. If we believed it to be one of those epidemics of public caprice to which we seem to be increasingly liable, we could afford to leave it, with other ephemera, to those who "spend their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing." But such, we are satisfied, is not the fact. It is a serious question to many minds, and among them some of the first minds in England and America, whether it is not our duty to endeavor to make the best version of the Scriptures still better. The interests involved in the determination of this question are too important to allow it to pass without a candid and deliberate inquiry into its merits.

The apparent cause of the movement was humble enough, — a schism in the "American and Foreign Bible Society," an organization originated by a secession of the main body of the Baptists from the support of the American Bible Society. The denomination was by no means a unit in the action by which a rival society was organized, and in 1850 that society was itself rent asunder by a proposition to publish an amended version of the New Testament in the English language. Thus originated the American Bible Union, having for its object the revision of the English Scriptures and the publication of "pure versions" in other languages. It might well be thought, as it was by most lookers-on, that this division and

subdivision of a denomination, on what seemed to be merely a question of sectarian policy, could have no effect on the Christian public at large, nor any good effect upon those immediately concerned in it. But from this inauspicious beginning a new impulse has been given to the purpose of revising our Scriptures. What was before only an aspiration of individuals, has become a matter of popular interest. Men like the late Professor Scholefield and Archdeacon Hare had modestly suggested the desirableness of an amended version, without any sensible effect. But the announcement that what had been only desiderated was actually to be attempted, had the effect to give courage to some who had hardly ventured to speak, and to arouse others who might have been indifferent. The question has come to enlist the attention of numbers who know very little of the history or movements of the American Bible Union, until such scholars as Dean Trench and the Five Clergymen think it no condescension to look into the matter. So far as we can judge by the most obvious indications, the interest is more general in England than in this country. We see no evidence that there is in either country a very numerous party in favor of the measure; but it has more friends than the most sanguine would have looked for a few years ago.

For such a turn of opinion it is evident that some other cause must be sought than the sectarian activity of a fraction of a sect. That, of itself, would have tended to make the whole matter odious. If there were not a feeling extensively diffused, a train laid which needed only a spark to kindle it, there would have been no such kindling as we now witness. And whoever will attentively consider the condition and tendencies of Biblical study for the last thirty years, and its relations to popular religious instruction, cannot fail to observe an unconscious preparation for the entertainment of this question. So far from wondering at the popular interest which, as Dean Trench observes, "differs the present agitation of the matter from preceding ones," we might rather have anticipated an earlier and more general attention to it, at least in this country.

The depressed state of critical learning in England during

the last century had its counterpart here, but from a different cause. The influence of President Edwards turned nearly all the more active thinkers on religion to the pursuit of metaphysical theology. His great doctrinal treatises on the Will and on Original Sin, and his most important practical work, on the Religious Affections, alike and almost equally invited thoughtful men from study of the written revelation to scrutiny of their own souls. Not that Edwards was wanting in reverence for the Scriptures, or in the proper mental and spiritual aptitudes for their successful interpretation. But his own experience and the stress of circumstances concurred to give his powers another direction, and the immense force which he exerted upon his contemporaries and the rising ministry determined most aspiring minds into the same line. Thence arose that school of New England theology, whose direct development may be said to have been brought to its ultimate result by the clear insight and dauntless logic of Emmons. But an influence had been meanwhile arising in another quarter, and preparing to work a complete revolution. The German mind began to come into communication with that of England and America. Much as our Teutonic cousins have to answer for in some respects, especially for the unbelieving and irreverent spirit which too many of their scholars have exhibited, giving to their productions a decided flavor of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, we owe them a weighty debt of gratitude. It is not extravagant to say that they have re-created the science of criticism. Whatever advance has been recently made in Biblical learning, in Great Britain or America, has been made under an impulse given by them. Under their leadership the original languages of Scripture have been investigated anew, and great light has been shed upon them from the comparison of languages and dialects. Scripture history and antiquities have been explored with a vigor before unthought of. The East has been visited by pilgrims who surveyed its geographical monuments with more instructed eyes than those of monks or sentimental tourists. Comparative criticism has done much towards restoring an authentic text of the New Testament. Materials are now available for a more exact interpretation of the Scriptures than

was possible to the best scholars of the seventeenth century. And there are scholars to use them with effect. He who compares the commentaries now current with what were deemed, fifty years ago, the most valuable helps to clerical study in the English language, whatever merits of the old-school annotators he may miss, cannot fail to recognize the fruits of a more generous culture than was known in the last or attainable in any preceding age. The effect of this progress has not been confined to any narrow class of learned men. It has pervaded the religious community. Not that all the people or all the clergy are advanced scholars, but scholarship is more worthily appreciated by both. Higher qualifications are sought by candidates for the ministry, and are demanded by the laity. By a happy coincidence, simultaneously with this revival of interest in sacred learning, there has taken place among us a revival (to use a technical term in a wider than its technical sense) of experimental and practical religion, awakening a greater zeal for the diffusion and enforcement of spiritual truth. The Biblical instruction of the young has come to be more systematically pursued. An impulse has been given to the creation of a Biblical literature for the people. The amount and increasing value of popular works for the aid of Bible-students can hardly be estimated by one who has not had occasion to observe with some care their number and character.

In these general statements we are anxious to be understood as speaking comparatively, and in contrast with the condition of things in the past. Tried by a standard of absolute excellence, comparing what is accomplished with what is desirable or ideally possible, we "have not attained." Or, if we inquire whether the men of our time have improved their advantages as faithfully as the men of the seventeenth century did theirs, it may appear that we have nothing to boast of. By as much as the materials for sound critical knowledge have been multiplied, by so much are our scholars held to a stricter accountability for their use. Still, — and this is all that concerns our present purpose, — it is certain that the English version, after the lapse of more than two hundred years, does not adequately represent what is known of the meaning of the Scriptures.

Now, without intending such an effect, and very generally without being aware of it, the votaries of sacred learning have been criticising our version, and making its imperfections notorious. Any interpretation of the original which involves a departure from the sense of the English text, is a criticism of the latter, whether formally stated or not. Every theological seminary is a college of revisers. The professors teach, and the pupils study, the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. The vernacular Bible is not expressly disparaged, nor even irreverently thought of, but as an authority it is quietly set aside. The commentaries referred to are founded on the original, not on the translated Scriptures. This tendency affects all departments of study. The instructor in systematic theology must go behind the translation of his proof-texts. The lecturer on church polity must define *ἐκκλησία*, and investigate anew the passages touching the offices and duties of bishops, elders, and deacons. The youthful theologues carry with them into the ministry the habits acquired in the divinity school. A sensible preacher will of course avoid pedantic displays of learning in the pulpit. But if he is an honest man, he cannot promulgate what he believes to be erroneous interpretations of the Word of God. Whether he quotes Greek in his sermons or not, his people will soon find out that their pastor does not regard the English version as inspired. Dr. Trench seems to suppose that this thought would be a novelty to the mass of the people. He says:—

“We must never leave out of sight that for a great multitude of readers the English Version is not the translation of an inspired Book, but is itself the inspired Book. . . . The English Bible is to them all which the Hebrew Old Testament, which the Greek New Testament, is to the devout scholar. It receives from them the same undoubting affiance. They have never realized the fact that the Divine utterance was not made at the first in those very English words which they read in their cottages, and hear in their church.”—pp. 174, 175.

These remarks may be just, as applied to rural congregations in England, but they are of very limited application here. If the title-pages of their Bibles and Testaments did not hint to them the existence of certain “original tongues” and of “former translations,” the people would be at no loss to find

out the fact in other ways. Even in England, judging by the practice of eminent divines, men must be exceedingly dull of hearing to escape information on this point. Archbishop Whately, in his "Lectures addressed to his Parishioners by a Country Pastor," is profuse of amended translations, some of them extremely felicitous. Instances of the same freedom appear in the sermons of William Archer Butler. In the Occasional Sermons of Dr. John Harris we find a discourse, the text of which is stated as follows:—

"Rom. i. 16, 17: '*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth*';—it is *that* through which the power of God is manifested in saving every one that believes—'*to the Jew first*'—to him it is offered in the first instance—'*and also to the Greek*'—or Gentile. '*For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith*'—therein is revealed to our faith the doctrine of justification, or acceptance with God—of interest in a Divine righteousness, acquired by faith alone. '*As it is written*'—in the Old Testament—'*the just by faith shall live.*'"—p. 1.

Here, besides the mixture of exposition, the careful reader will notice that in the last clause the words "by faith" are made to connect themselves grammatically with "just," which is used as equivalent to the participle *justified*, giving to the clause this meaning,— "he who is justified by faith shall live."

While the minister is thus engaged in amending the translation, and publishing his emendations from the pulpit, the people are favored with more elaborate essays to the same purpose in the books they study. The most popular commentaries interpret the original Scriptures. Professor Bush's learned notes on the Pentateuch, thickly studded with Hebrew and Rabbinical quotations, (each duly rendered into English,) are designed "for popular use." Mr. Barnes's notes on the entire New Testament, and on several important books of the Old Testament, were avowedly composed for common readers of the Bible, and in some of them nearly every verse is re-translated. Of these and similar works, thousands of copies are circulated. They are found all over the land, in the possession of teachers and advanced pupils in Sunday

schools. New contributions to the stock of popular expository works are made every year, and it is noticeable that they are increasingly critical in their character. The authors ostensibly comment on the received version, but they are in fact superseding it by their own independent translations. We recently watched with interest a group of young persons studying their Sabbath lesson, guided by a "question-book," and aided by a volume of notes on the New Testament. They studied socially, one reading a question aloud, and the others searching for an answer. The commentator whose notes they used had evidently written from a study of the Greek. For half an hour we listened in vain for evidence that they once looked at the thin margin of text at the top of his pages. So far from making the English Bible the object of study, they did not pay it the compliment of a reference. We believe that this scene was only an example of what is going on weekly in places innumerable.*

Is it surprising, then, that the proposal to revise our version, so as to add to its other excellences the merit of more faithfully exhibiting the meaning of the sacred writers, should be received with increasing favor? The only object of a translation is to convey the meaning of the original to those who are unable to read it for themselves; and if men are taught that the version in their hands fails to do this, it would seem that their most obvious conclusion must be in favor of a new or corrected version. This is in fact just such a proposal as is most likely to be received with approbation by the popular mind. It is only men of rare scholarship who are able so to comprehend the work of translation as to appreciate its difficulties. Common minds know nothing of this, but they are abundantly capable of understanding the desirableness of the object. If they believe the Bible to contain the Word of God, they have the highest possible interest in its contents,

* A minister of the Baptist denomination, graduated at a New England college, proposed at first to enter the ministry, as many of his brethren have done, without a special theological and exegetical course of study. His purpose was changed in consequence of the embarrassment he experienced from his ignorance of the Hebrew language, in trying to instruct a Bible-class of young men out of the Old Testament. He had commentaries, — but so had they.

and cannot be indifferent to the question whether it is accurately translated. An erroneous version is worse than none, for it may mislead them. A defective version is diminished in value in proportion to the amount of defect with which it is chargeable. Such men would not be prone to suspect the authenticity of the common translation, and would never have originated a movement for correcting it. But the matter once brought to their notice, it is naturally seized upon and tenaciously adhered to. They are likely to be far more incredulous of difficulties. "What!" we have heard an unlettered Christian exclaim, "do you say that our version cannot be made better? You think yourself able to correct it, and have often done so. The commentaries you study correct it. You are all of you ready enough to do this for yourselves, why can you not do it for us?" The history of the American Bible Union is instructive in this respect. When first organized, it made a schism in the denomination in which it originated. Against it were arrayed their most respectable scholars, their most popular and influential preachers, their literary and theological seminaries, and the principal presses under their control, while other churches and sects looked on with mingled pity and disgust. But the people in considerable numbers gathered around it, and have sustained it. Its treasury has been well supplied with funds, and its operations have hardly been impeded for a day. Its influence has overleaped sectarian boundaries. Men of high and deserved reputation, who were hostile or indifferent, have come to identify themselves with the enterprise. It has not indeed attained to a flattering popularity. The opposition to it is very great. But it is steadily gaining friends. The movement, though not rapid, is mainly in the direction towards success. We see nothing in experience, or in present indications, to justify the belief that it is likely to be arrested by anything short of a demonstration that the end pursued is unattainable. That organization may not endure, but the agitation in some form will continue.

What duty is imposed upon us by this state of facts? It seems to us very clear, that we cannot and ought not to rest content with things as they are, but that the duty and re-

sponsibility of at least attempting a revision must be met. It may be an unwelcome, as it must be a difficult duty. We might perhaps prefer that the question had never been raised. But it is here, and it claims to be soberly dealt with. It is not by the American Bible Union, nor Mr. Ellicott, nor any other man or body of men, that the necessity is laid upon us, but by Divine Providence, by the inflexible logic of events. Whether we will or no, we are fast tending towards a state of things in which the English Bible, as it is, must part with a portion of the reverence in which it has been held. It is still the family Bible, the Church Bible, the closet Bible, the spring of holy and consoling thoughts, the storehouse of sacred eloquence, the inspirer and the liturgy of prayer and praise. But it is not, in the degree in which it once was, the *authoritative* Scripture. It is not, or it is fast ceasing to be, the minister's study Bible. It is not the book which the commentator expounds. With every advance in the popularizing of Biblical interpretation, it must come to be less and less regarded as the real source of popular religious instruction. How long can this process go on, and not withdraw from it, to a very injurious extent, the reverence of the people?

The *duty* of revision, we have said, and the word was not lightly chosen. This is a matter which rises infinitely above any question of inclination or taste. If our vernacular Bible were merely a book of English literature, a proposal to attempt an improvement upon it might well excite astonishment. All that is so often said of the tender and venerable associations connected with it, and of its preciousness as an English classic, would be in place. But when we receive it as a book of religious authority, we can accept it in that character only as it conveys to us the true meaning of the inspired original. If the version is imperfect, and its imperfections are remediable, there is a presumptive obligation to amend it. The burden rests upon those who resist, to prove that revision is either unnecessary or impracticable. This seems to be forgotten by some, who exclaim against "innovation," as if they really believed that King James's Bible was older than the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. The words of Dean Trench on this point are very much to the purpose:—

“Nothing is gained, on the one hand, by vague and general charges of inaccuracy brought against our Version; they require to be supported by detailed proofs. Nothing, on the other hand, is gained by charges and insinuations against those who urge a revision, as though they desired to undermine the foundations of the religious life and faith of England. . . . As little is the matter advantaged, or in any way brought nearer to a settlement, by sentimental appeals to the fact that this, which it is now proposed to alter, has been the Scripture of our childhood, in which we, and so many generations before us, first received the tidings of everlasting life. All this, well as it may deserve to be considered, yet, as argument at all deciding the question, will sooner or later have to be cleared away; and the facts of the case, apart from cries, and insinuations, and suggestions of evil motives, and appeals to the religious passions and prejudices of the day, — apart, too, from feelings which in themselves demand the highest respect, — will have to be dealt with in that spirit of seriousness and earnestness which a matter affecting so profoundly the whole moral and spiritual life of the English people, not to speak of nations which are yet unborn, abundantly deserves.” — pp. 10, 11.

As to the first of the positions indicated, — that revision is unnecessary, — though very commonly taken, we must regard it as a strange one to be so much as admitted by Protestant Christians. We are told that, although our version is in some points inaccurate or obscure, there are no “grave and essential errors” in it. “The scholar can resort to the original, and, if need be, communicate to others the results of his studies.”* “The rule of faith” for the laity, then, is to be, not the Scriptures, but the Scriptures *plus* the priest or “doctor.” We are concerned to know by what gauge any part of a Divine revelation is ascertained to be superfluous. We should presume that the teachings of Scripture concerning the future state deserve to be ranked among those of the greatest moment. Is there no ambiguity in the language of our version on that subject, which might be removed by a more accurate translation? It happens by a curious, almost a whimsical, conjunction of opposites, that this sort of apology for errors of translation comes oftenest from men who hold to the verbal inspiration of the Bible. A distinguished theo-

* *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Andover, April, 1858, p. 287.

logian of the Presbyterian Church, who has been conspicuous in denouncing a departure from even the punctuation and chapter-headings — why not the spelling also? — of King James's translators, holds the following language: —

“We can understand how a man can regard the Bible as a mere human composition; we can understand how he can regard inspiration as a mere elevation of the religious consciousness; but how any one can hold that the sacred writers were inspired as to their thoughts, but not as to their language, is to us perfectly incomprehensible. The denial of *verbal* inspiration is, in our view, the denial of *all* inspiration, in the Scriptural sense of the doctrine. No man can have a wordless thought, any more than there can be a formless flower. By a law of our present constitution, we think in words, and, as far as our consciousness goes, it is as impossible to infuse thoughts into the mind without words, as it is to bring men into the world without bodies.”

Whether He with whom that is possible which is impossible with man, may not bring to pass more things than are dreamed of in our philosophy; whether every doctrine which is incomprehensible is therefore false; whether the verity of inspiration may not be assured to us, though the manner be hidden; and other questions suggested by this quotation, — cannot be now and here discussed. But we may observe, that whoever thinks thus of the words of the Bible assumes a fearful responsibility in consenting for a moment, unless under the restraint of an unconquerable necessity, that one of them should be obscured or misrepresented. To all such, as to every man who believes the Bible to be verily a Divine gift, we commend the solemn words of Mr. Ellicott: —

“If we are truly and heartily persuaded that there are errors and inaccuracies in our version; if we know that, though by far the best and most faithful translation the world has ever seen, it still shares the imperfections that belong to every human work, however noble and exalted; if we feel and know that these imperfections are no less patent than remediable, — then surely it is our duty to Him who gave that blessed Word for the guidance of man, through evil report and through good report to labor by gentle counsels to supply what is lacking and correct what is amiss, to render what has been blessed with great measures of perfection yet more perfect, and to hand it down thus marked with our reverential love and solicitude, as the best and most blessed heritage we have to leave to them who shall follow us.

“It is in vain to cheat our own souls with the thought that these errors are either insignificant or imaginary. There *are* errors, there *are* inaccuracies, there *are* misconceptions, there *are* obscurities, not indeed so many in number or so grave in character as the forward spirits of our day would persuade us of, — but there *are* misrepresentations of the language of the Holy Ghost, and that man who, after being in any degree satisfied of this, permits himself to lean to the counsels of a timid or popular obstructiveness, or who, intellectually unable to test the truth of these allegations, nevertheless permits himself to denounce or deny them, will, if they be true, most surely, at the dread day of final account, have to sustain the tremendous charge of having dealt deceitfully with the inviolable Word of God.” — *On the Pastoral Epistles*, Pref., p. xii.

Detailed proof of those imperfections in our version, on account of which a revision is called for, cannot of course be offered within the limits of a review article. Specimens of them are given in the works of Dr. Trench and Professor Scholefield, and are wisely and temperately discussed. But if we may so far presume on the interest of our readers in this subject, we may be able to set the importance of the measure in a clearer light, by indicating the nature of the amendments sought, with a few brief specifications. In making these criticisms, we are not to be understood as censuring the translators. A part of the defects charged belong to their age, and not to themselves. Expressions which are now obsolete were then current, and they could not foresee nor provide against the changes of time. Some of their errors arose from the fact that they were not making a new version, but revising older ones, and their vigilance was sometimes intermitted. In other cases we have an advantage over them from the progress that has since been made in the knowledge of Biblical philology and antiquities, for which we can afford to be thankful without being censorious. And if inadvertences appear for which we cannot account, it will be time enough to indulge severity of judgment when we forget that we also are fallible men. But we cannot so readily acquit ourselves, if, through mistaken reverence for them, we suffer their work to continue defaced, and subject to needless disparagement.

Of imperfections which were not such when the version

was made, but are due to the changes of time, the occurrence of obsolete words, and of current words in obsolete senses, is among the most obvious. Thus we have "fray," meaning *to frighten*; "daysman," *an umpire*; "leasing," *lies*; "ear," *to till*; "to wit," *to know*; the last occurring in that very awkward expression, "we do you to wit," for *we make known to you*. This class of words is not very numerous, but is enough so, taking into account the frequency of their occurrence, to constitute a noticeable blemish, and one easily removed. The errors occasioned by changes of signification in words are more serious. Instances that will readily occur to the discriminating reader are "conversation" in the sense of deportment, "honest" for decent, or becoming, "worship" for civil respect. Most readers probably understand that, when Christians are called "a peculiar people," the phrase imports their duty to manifest a character distinguished in a marked degree from that of worldly or irreligious men. It really expresses property or ownership, and is only another method of saying that they are "not their own." "Vengeance," as used by our translators, is generally equivalent to punitive justice. "Is God unrighteous *that taketh vengeance* [who punishes]?" We must think it no unimportant matter that "the Judge of all the earth" is represented to common readers as awarding justice in a revengeful spirit. Here should be noticed obsolete grammatical forms, such as the confounding of "who" and "which," and the use of "his" for "its," — a word not current in the seventeenth century. In regard to words that offend by their grossness, it is difficult in this over-squeamish age to lay down any certain rule. But we suppose it will be generally admitted that our version of the Old Testament is disfigured by an unnecessary coarseness of expression, which impairs the pleasure of reading it, and which could be abated without any serious loss of precision or energy. The obscurity arising from inconsistency in the rendering of proper names, by which, for example, Elijah in the Old Testament becomes Elias in the New, Hosea becomes Osee, and Joshua is translated into Jesus, is sometimes perplexing, and in the last-named instance positively misleading, as in Hebrews iv. 8.

Of errors, or inconsistencies, in translation we can give but

a few examples. The treatment of idiomatic peculiarities by our translators is fruitful of embarrassment. Hebraisms are generally resolved into equivalent English expressions, but are sometimes literally translated. Thus the use of a dependent noun instead of an adjective is sometimes retained in the translation, oftener turned into idiomatic English. We have "his holy hill," and "the mountain of his holiness," the Hebrew being the same in both cases. When this usage is extended to the literal translation of such a phrase as "the right hand of my righteousness," the sense is obscured. Sometimes a Hebraism is imagined where none exists, as in the expression, "the liberty of the glory of the children of God," which is rendered "the glorious liberty," without sufficient reason. The word "son," which by a frequent Orientalism is used to express almost any relation of persons or things, generally gives place to the word or phrase that corresponds to it in English. "Son of the bow" is properly rendered "arrow," and so in very numerous cases. But we have "son of Belial," "son of peace," "son of consolation," phrases nearly as unintelligible in themselves as those that are more rationally treated. To this category belong certain Hebraisms which are at once unintelligible and repulsive to us.

The neglect of the definite article, sometimes omitting it where it is found in the Greek, and again inserting it without authority, weakens, and occasionally perverts, the meaning of the New Testament. An instance of omission occurs in Romans v. 15: "For if through the offence of (the) one (the) many be dead, much more the grace of God by (the) one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto (the) many." An instance of improper insertion is to be noticed in the same Epistle, ii. 14: "For when (the) Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law," &c. The Apostle does not say that the Gentiles, as a whole, do this, but Gentiles, some of them. By their error in this respect, our translators have much obscured an important distinction. In the Gospels CHRIST is usually not a name, but a title, and has the article. In the Epistles it passes into a proper name, and is generally without the article. The reason is plain. Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, He who was to come. But

the Apostles assume it as demonstrated that he was the Messiah, and use the title thenceforth as a strictly personal appellation. Common readers are in danger of understanding the question, "What think ye of Christ?" as equivalent to "What do you think of me?" rather than, as it is, "What is your view of the Messiah?" — what sort of a personage do you look for? Negligence in the rendering of words on which the whole sense of some passage turns, though not very frequent, is sufficiently so to perplex the reader. In Romans, chapter iv., *λογίζομαι* occurs eleven times. It is twice rendered "count," three times "reckon," and six times "impute." How much greater clearness would have been imparted to the reasoning by adhering to a single English word wherever the term occurs! Dean Trench (pp. 69–83) enumerates several striking examples of this. We might add instances of error or obscurity arising from confusion in respect to the tenses of verbs and the force of prepositions; but as the utmost that is possible within reasonable limits of space would afford only slight glimpses of a very extensive prospect, it may be wise to forbear.

Now who will say that accuracy in these points is of small consequence? If the reader merely gained by revision superior clearness of narrative, considering how much of the Scriptures consists of narrative, this would be of no small advantage. But the profit would be even more striking in those books which are doctrinal, whose verses are citadels for the possession of which whole armies of controversialists have almost literally fought. There is something more than a verbal difference between the expression (Romans iii. 25), "for the remission," and the more correct "on account of the passing by" of past sins; between "if one died for all, then were all dead," (2 Cor. v. 14,) and the more literal "then all died." In such cases we are reviewing ground trampled by polemic warfare and also watered with the tears of devotion, and is it of small import whether we go astray?

There are two points, not alluded to in any of the recent discussions of this subject that have fallen under our notice, on which some general remarks are in place. Attention seems to have been given, in England, chiefly to the New Testa-

ment. But we suppose it to be generally agreed among competent scholars, that our version is more accurate in the New Testament than in the Old. Greater advance has been made in Hebrew than in Greek grammar and lexicography. The poetical parts of the Old Testament especially suffered loss in the hands of our translators, and need a more thorough revision. Of this any one may satisfy himself by examining, not the interpretations of German rationalists, but those of so conservative expositors as Dr. Alexander, for example, or Dr. Henderson; or by comparing the common version of the book of Job with the excellent revised version published by the Bible Union. The labor required here must be very great, but the resulting benefit will more than repay it, if the Psalms and the Prophetic writings, those storehouses of devotional thought and language, are presented in a form that will do more ample justice to their divine beauty. In the New Testament the Epistles demand the utmost industry and skill. They are especially obscured by inattention to the force of the particles which indicate the transitions and connections of thought. It is no exaggeration to say, that there are passages in the Epistles of Paul which, as they appear to the mere English reader, are without any discernible connection or relation of parts. They are read in fragments, with no attempt, even, to trace the Apostle's logic. Here, also, there is a wide and very difficult department of labor, in which the conscientious student is thankful for small gains at almost any sacrifice of toil.

And this brings us to the alternative question, Granting that a revised version of the Scriptures is desirable in itself, is it practicable? Can it be effected? Can it, especially, be effected, without doing harm that would more than outweigh its benefits?

There is undoubtedly a very serious obstacle at the threshold of the undertaking. When the present translation was "authorized," English Protestantism was externally a unit. There was internal strife in the national church, but little actual separation from it. Each body of non-conformists, in breaking away from the national communion, took with them the authorized version. Now, with the spread of

the English race and of the English language upon other continents, the Church of England can speak with but a limited authority on this matter. She may revise her Scriptures for her own children, but her action may or may not be deferred to by those beyond her pale. And among ourselves, where all bodies of Christians are equal before the law, there is still greater difficulty in the way of arriving at any unanimity of action. There is room for almost any amount of jealousy and discord. But we do not think there is cause to despair of a practicable union, provided only there is a just recognition of the worth of the object. When timidity and prejudice give place to more elevated conceptions of the undertaking and a more earnest desire for its accomplishment, all obstacles to co-operation will melt away.

A more serious difficulty, an obstruction to the doing of the work when it is undertaken, is the unsettled state of the Greek text of the New Testament. Criticism has made encouraging progress, but her labors are far from being ended. The text from which our version was made will now be accepted by comparatively few well-informed persons as the basis of an improved translation, and there is as yet no agreement upon any other. The revisers of the American Bible Union adopt as a provisional basis the received text, with such variations from it as have the concurrence of critical editors for the last hundred years. This is hardly satisfactory, but would be a decided advance on the imperfect editions of the seventeenth century. It seems to us, however, that the most honest way of dealing with the reader, in those cases in which the variation affects the sense, is to translate the various readings and place them in the margin. The fear of "unsettling" men's minds is unworthy of a Christian. Why should we hesitate to let the whole truth be known?

A more difficult question remains, Are we competent to the undertaking? Is there adequate scholarship to do the work, and to do it well? This may justly be a matter of anxiety, when we see that it weighs so heavily on the minds of men who would be unanimously looked to as among the chiefs in classical, sacred, and English learning. "On the whole," says Dean Trench, "I am persuaded that a revision ought to

come; I am convinced that it will come. Not, however, I would trust, as yet; for we are not as yet in any respect prepared for it; the Greek and the English which should enable us to bring this to a successful end might, it is to be feared, be wanting alike." And so Mr. Ellicott: "This only I will say, that it is my honest conviction that for any *authoritative* revision we are not yet mature, either in Biblical learning or Hellenistic scholarship." There are many to whom these utterances will be incomprehensible. The rash tyro, who, just able with the help of Robinson's Lexicon to construe the Greek Testament, is not afraid to criticise the English version to the right and left, has no such doubts. The good men who contribute to Bible Unions, and wonder why the expected new version is so long in coming, cannot understand them. For ourselves, while we regard with profound respect the sentiments of these eminent scholars, and would tremble to "rush in" where such men "fear to tread," we venture to believe that their modesty aggravates their fears to an unnecessary pitch. It should be remembered, in the first place, that a perfect version is not to be expected. That measure of learning which is adequate to judge with so penetrating a discernment the merits and defects of the existing version, cannot be altogether at fault in humbly and faithfully seeking its amendment. And especially it should be borne in mind, that we shall never succeed if we fear to make the attempt. Until men try, they cannot know their own strength.

In one respect we must confess a want of sympathy with much that is written on this subject. The incomparable English of our version, it is said, cannot be approached, and the only effect of revision would be to mar the composition. It would be no longer of a piece. Now, in no spirit of vaunting, we trust, nor in any sympathy with the vanity of "the age," we express the conviction that in this very respect the present is a better time for undertaking a revision than could have been selected at any previous period. During the last half of the seventeenth, and almost throughout the eighteenth century, a vitiated taste in literature caused the old English authors to be neglected. But for fifty years past they have been studied with more diligence and with a higher

appreciation. We have little doubt that there are to-day, in any one of the midland shires of England, more persons able to enjoy the great writers of the seventeenth century, than there were in London and both the Universities a hundred years ago. The limitations of the proposed work are also to be considered. If it were demanded that a new version should be composed throughout, to rival that which we have received, there would be reason to despair. But are we so straitened for good English, that we cannot repair the rents of the old fabric and replace a stone here and there,—while we have for our quarry not only the vocabulary of the version itself, but the versions from which it was revised, with the wealth of the contemporary literature? The very love and veneration with which the English Bible is viewed, and which cause so many to shrink from the risk of marring its sanctities, encourage the belief that it has fallen upon a fit time, and among men with whom it may be safely trusted for needed amendment. At least, let it be tried.

As for the shock consequent on revision, which may be expected to unsettle men's faith in the Scriptures, and to reduce everything, literature as well as religion, to chaos, according to the expressed apprehensions of some, we have come to look on such threatened calamities with a good degree of resignation. We do not think so poorly of the Christianity of our time, in comparison with that of past ages, as to believe that men's faith rests on words and syllables, especially on obsolete words, words which they would rather not read aloud, or words which convey to them either no meaning at all or a wrong one. We remember that the people of England met and survived the "shock" of six successive versions of the Bible before the present translation was made, and we trust that our own generation, both there and here, can accept some necessary corrections in their copies without being driven to apostasy. Considering especially that the revision cannot be wrought in a day, and that the improved version is in no danger of coming upon us like lightning from the clear sky, it may be reasonably hoped that sufficient time will be given to get out of the way of serious harm from it.

All effort in that direction for the present must be merely

tentative. In the existing temper of the public mind, any proposal for definite action looking toward a final result would doubtless be repelled. Dean Trench suggests, (and the editor of Professor Scholefield's Essay seems to be of the same opinion,) that nothing in the way of revision should now be attempted. He would have a select body of scholars agree upon such corrections of the text as meet their mature approbation, and cause these to be published for the consideration of all interested. By degrees, he thinks, these may so commend themselves to general favor as to demand, and have accorded to them, a place in the current text. His suggestions incidentally illustrate one of the difficulties inherent in the undertaking, — that arising from the divided state of Christendom. He would have the Church of England take the initiative, and invite the co-operation of scholars from this country, and from some of the dissenting bodies in England. These last, he is careful to intimate, should co-operate as scholars merely, — implying that the elect workmen of the national Church are to bear some other and higher character. He also makes two noticeable exceptions. "The so-called Baptists" are to be excluded, because they demand not only the translation, but the interpretation of a certain word; those dissenters, also, who do not accord with the doctrinal articles of the Church of England, are to be left out of the account. As to the first of these exceptions, it will probably surprise the very reverend Dean to learn that in this country "the so-called Baptists" in great numbers have repudiated the revision movement in the gross, and have particularly protested against any change of the version in respect to the terms descriptive of the rite of baptism. It might also, we should suppose, occur to his mind, that some of that sect, however inadmissible might be their demands touching one or two words, would be able to render service towards the better translation of sundry other words in which their sectarian prepossessions have no separate interest. Of one thing he may be assured, — that, should the enterprise ever become general in this country, there are "so-called Baptists" whose learning and skill could be dispensed with only to the serious loss of all parties concerned. Nor are we able to see that any doctrinal test would

be profitable. Unless the Church of England has made rapid strides towards unity within a very recent period, there are nearly as wide differences between those embraced within her communion, as there are between most of them and those who are unable to digest an *ex animo* subscription to her Articles. We can think of only one reasonable limit as to opinion,—that of an agreement in holding to the divine authority of the Bible as a rule of faith.

But waiving discussion of this point, which is not immediately practical, it seems to us that the surest method of conciliating men to the undertaking, of removing prejudice and awakening sympathy, is to begin the work at once. Mr. Elliott and the four clergymen associated with him have taken a step on the sure road to success. Deprecating as earnestly as Dr. Trench any present attempt at an authoritative revision, they propose that “bands of independent scholars” should undertake the task, and offer specimens of what may be accomplished with some select portions of Scripture. Such amended versions, coming into the hands of scholars for criticism, may perhaps also be welcomed to the study as aids in Scriptural interpretation, and to the closet as quickeners of devotion. It may be anticipated that by and by, through experience of their benefits, there will be a readiness to accept an improved version as a whole. We are convinced that a good revised text, thus put into circulation and placed beside the common text, would plead the cause of revision more effectually than whole libraries of discussion, and with more speedy effect than the best catalogues of corrections, though presented as invitingly as they are by Dean Trench himself. In this point of view we welcome the labors of the Five Clergymen, and trust that they will have sufficient encouragement to proceed further in the same direction. Whatever else may be said of their productions,—and very much might be said in their praise,—they are worthy of special commendation for the skill and delicacy which they have shown in dealing with the common version. Our only complaint against them in this regard is, that they are a little too much hampered by the fear of modernizing the style. Because the use of “his” for *its*, and of “which” for *who*, belongs to the admitted usages

of the language in the seventeenth century, they hold the retention of them to be necessary to the due preservation of the archaic English style. But we conceive that a distinction is to be made among archaisms. Some are beauties, and some are blemishes. An evident deformity is not to be cherished merely because it is old. In cases where antique modes of expression are not only superseded, but proscribed as incorrect and inelegant, by long-established usage, the retaining of such forms does nothing for, but sins against, the dignity and sacredness of the Scriptures.

In this country scholars lack "independence" in more senses than one. Very few have the means and appliances for prosecuting such a work with success. Association in some form is necessary. Having spoken rather freely of the origin of the American Bible Union, justice requires that we should not dismiss it without some further notice. At the outset it suffered all the disadvantages, without the compensating helps, of a sectarian origin. That was against it in the eyes of the general public, while the sect with which it was popularly identified, for that very reason, was hostile to its designs. Its managers had the discretion to proclaim a non-sectarian position, and to invite the aid of scholars from all sections of Protestantism. A majority of its supporters are still, we presume, Baptists, but there is nothing exclusive in its constitution. It further suffered from the necessity, if it would attempt anything immediate, of employing revisers of inferior capacity. Some of their experimental revisions, which were intended only as a sort of prospectus of what was to be attempted, have been turned to the discredit of the Union. But in securing the services of Professor Conant, whose revision of Job speaks better for him than any commendations of ours, and more recently of Professor Hackett, whose accomplishments as a Biblical scholar and expositor are universally recognized, with those of other eminent men on either side of the Atlantic, it has made a more effective appeal to public consideration. Its library of Biblical works is said to be unrivalled on this continent. We see no reason to doubt that it will yet entitle itself to a far greater measure of consideration than is now accorded to it.

But whatever may be the result of particular measures, we have faith that the great object in view will ultimately be reached, and that the English Bible, not superseded, not disparaged, but arrayed in still higher beauty than it now boasts, will be handed down to a grateful and revering posterity.

- ART. VIII.—1. *Les Lionnes Pauvres*. Par EMILE ANGIER.
2. *Fanny*. Par ERNEST FEYDEAU.
3. *L'Assassinat du Pont Rouge*. Par CHARLES BARBARA.
4. *Italia*. Par THEOPHILE GAUTIER.
5. *La Mode*. Par THEOPHILE GAUTIER.
6. *La Clef du Grand Cyrus*. Par M. VICTOR COUSIN. 2 vols.
7. *Essais Morales et Historiques*. Par EMILE MONTEGUT.

It is certainly not a matter of indifference to note what the stage in France has come to within the last ten years. From the closing period of the Restoration to the middle of the July monarchy, especially from 1828 to 1847, the reigning literary influence might be said to be embodied in the form of the two-volume novel, which little by little swelled out to the novel in four, eight, twelve, or even more volumes. The novel was so in fashion, that no other form conveyed any strong image to the public eye or impression to the public mind. From *Indiana* to the *Mystères de Paris*, we shall find, through a dense mass of prose, whether with illustrious names or under names perfectly obscure, that all notions, social or moral, were most readily absorbed by the reading world in France when they were presented in the shape of a continuous narrative,—of a romance, in short. Both men and women imbibed the most dangerous and depraved ideas with regard to the neglect of all domestic duties, from the perusal of *Valentine*, *Jacques*, and the rest of Madame Sand's works of fiction, backed by the (if possible) still more immoral creations of Balzac, Alexander Dumas, and Eugène Sue; while the latter began the Socialist revolutionary movement that reached its climax in February, 1848, by idealizing the very worst pas-